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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

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To Mr. FITZ-ADAM,

SIR,

AS it is incumbent on an hiſtorian, who writes the hiſtory of his own times, to take notice of public and remarkable events, ſo I apprehend it to be the buſineſs of a writer of eſſays for entertainment and inſtruction, to mark the paſſions as they riſe, and to treat of thoſe eſpecially, which appear to influence the manners of the age he lives in.

THE

THE love of noiſe, though a paſſion obſervable in all times and countries, has yet been ſo predominant of late years, and given riſe to ſo many of our modern cuſtoms, that I cannot think it unworthy of one of your ſpeculations.

IN many inſtances this paſſion is ſubordinate to, and proceeds from another, which is no leſs univerſal, and no leſs commendable; I mean the love of fame. Noiſe, or ſound in general, has been conſidered as a means, whereby thouſands have rendered themſelves famous in their generation; and this is the reaſon why to be famous, and to make a noiſe in the world, are commonly underſtood as equivalent expreſſions. Hence alſo the trumpet, becauſe one of the moſt noble inſtruments of ſound, was anciently made ſacred to the heathen goddeſs of fame: ſo that even at this day, when the world is too backward in doing juſtice to a man's merit, and he is conſtrained to do it himſelf, he is very properly ſaid to ſound his own praiſes, or trumpet out his fame.

THE great utility and advantages which may be obtained from noiſe, in ſeveral other reſpects, are very apparent. In the pulpit, the preacher who declaims in the loudeſt manner, is ſure to gain the greateſt number of followers. He has alſo the ſatisfaction of knowing, that the devotion of a great part of his audience depends more upon the ſoundneſs of his lungs, than the ſoundneſs of his doctrine.

AT the bar, every one knows the great influence of ſound: and indeed where people accuſtom themſelves to talk much and mean little, it behoves them to ſubſtitute noiſe in the place of eloquence. It is alſo a very juſt remark, that ſcurrility and abuſe require an elevation of the voice.

AT

In the ſenate it is often ſeen that the noiſe and thunder with which a patriot ſhakes the houſe, has redounded more to the good of his country, than all the knowledge of the hiſtory and laws of it, locked up in the breaſts of profound politicians, who have wanted voices to make themſelves heard.

From a conviction that noiſe in general can be made ſubſervient to ſo many good purpoſes, we may eaſily imagine that a great fondneſs muſt be often ſhewn for it, even where it's uſefulneſs, or tendency, is not immediately diſcernible: for from the very force of habit, the means will often be purſued, where the end is not perhaps attainable.

At a coffee-houſe which I frequent at St. James's end of the town, I meet with two ſets of young men, commonly diſtinguiſhed by the name of Beaux and Bloods; who are perpetually interrupting the converſation of the company, either with whiſtling of tunes, liſping of new-faſhioned oaths, trolling out affected ſpeeches and ſhort ſentences; or elſe with recitals of bold adventures paſt, and much bolder which they are about to engage in. But as noiſe is more becoming a Blood than a Beau, I am generally diverted with the one, and always tired with the other.

This has led me to reflect on the wiſdom which has been ſhewn in the inſtitution of certain clubs and nocturnal meetings for men, into which no perſons can be admitted as members, but thoſe who are diſpoſed to make that particular noiſe only, which is agreeable to the taſtes and talents of their reſpective ſocieties. Thus the members of one club vent their noiſe in politics; thoſe of another in critical diſſertations on eating and drinking; a third perhaps in ſtory-telling, and a fourth in a conſtant rotation of merry ſongs. In moſt of theſe

clubs

clubs there are preſidents choſen and inveſted with authority to be as noiſy as they pleaſe themſelves, and to inflict penalties on all thoſe who open out of time.

THE ladies indeed are ſomewhat more limited in their topics for noiſe, though their meetings for venting it are more numerous than thoſe of the men. They alſo lie under the diſadvantage of having voices of a tone too ſoft and delicate to be heard at a great diſtance: but they ſeem in ſome meaſure to have obviated theſe diſadvantages, by agreeing to talk all together; by which means, and as the ſubject is generally of the vituperative kind, they are able to cope with the men, even at the moſt vociferous of their clubs.

AGAIN; thoſe diverſions, in which noiſe moſt abounds, have been always held in the higheſt eſteem. The true and original country ſquire, who is actuated by this generous paſſion for noiſe, prefers the diverſion of hunting to all other enjoyments upon earth. He can entertain his companions for hours together with talking of his hounds, and extolling the divine muſic and harmony of their tongues; and ſcarce ever goes to bed without winding the horn, and having the full cry in his parlour. Horſe-racing, cock-fighting, bull-baiting and the like, are ſports which fill the hearts of the common people with the moſt extravagant delight; while their voices are employed in the loudeſt ſhouts and exclamations. In the opinion of our Engliſh ſailors, no entertainment can be compleat, where the all-cheering huzza is wanting: by the force of which they are inſpired with ſuch courage and reſolution, that even fighting itſelf becomes their diverſion.

IN London, where many of theſe ſports cannot be enjoyed, the paſſion for noiſe has appeared in various other

other ſhapes. It has within the memory of moſt men, given riſe to routs, drums, and hurricanes; which in all probability would have been improved into cannonades, thunders and earthquakes, before this time, had it not been for the late pannics on account of ſome concuſſions in the air, very much reſembling thoſe of a real earthquake. However, as a proof that the names already given to thoſe polite aſſemblies are extremely proper for them, I need only to remark that they are uſually compoſed of what is called the beſt company, who from time immemorial, have pleaded the privilege of birth for talking as loud as they can.

AMONG the many other inſtances of the effects of this paſſion in high life, I ſhall only take notice of one more; which is an ingenious method (unknown to our fore-fathers) of making a thundering noiſe at people's doors; by which you are generally given to underſtand that ſome perſon of conſequence does you the honour to ſuppoſe you are in the land of the living.

SOME may think that it will bear a diſpute, whether ſuch a violent hammering at people's doors may not be looked upon, in the eye of the law, as an attempt of a *forcible entry*: but it is my humble opinion, that it can only be conſtrued to an action of *aſſault* and *battery*; ſince it may be proved that the generality of thoſe who are guilty of this miſdemeanor have really no intention of making any entry at all: for when doors are open to them, they ſecure their retreat as faſt as they can; flying from the face of thoſe whom they count their enemies when at home, and viſit as their friends when abroad.

I HAVE now by me a certain curious book of memoirs, wherein the ſentiments of a wealthy old lady in the